

STRONG FAITH IN A FAITHFUL GOD

NO. 3445

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1915
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.”
Psalm 57:2

DAVID was in the Cave Adullam. He had fled from Saul, his remorseless foe, and had found shelter in the clefts of the rock. In the beginning of this psalm he rings the alarm bell—and very loud is the sound of it. “Be merciful unto me,” and then the clapper hits the other side of the bell. “Be merciful unto me.” He utters his miserere again and again. “My soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.” Thus he solaces himself by faith in his God.

Faith is always an active grace. Its activity, however, is first of all manifested in prayer. This precedes any action. “I will cry,” he says, “unto God most high.” You know how graciously he was preserved in the cave, even when Saul was close at his heels. Amongst the winding intricacies of those caverns he was enabled to conceal himself, though his enemy, with armed men, was close at hand.

The Targum has a note upon this, which may or may not be true. It states that a spider spun its web over the door of that part of the cave where David was concealed. The legend is not unlike one told of another king at a later time. It may have been true of David and it is quite as likely to be true of the other.

If so, David would, in such a passage as this, have directed his thoughts to the little acts God had performed for him which had become great in their results. If God makes a spider spin a web to save His servant’s life, David traces his deliverance not to the spider, but to the wonder-working JEHOVAH, and he says, “I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.”

It is delightful to see these exquisite prayers come from holy men in times of extreme distress. As the sick oyster makes the pearl, and not the healthy one, so does it seem as if the child of God brought forth gems of prayer in affliction more pure, brilliant, and sparkling than any that he produces in times of joy and exultation.

Our text is capable of three meanings. To these three meanings we shall call your attention briefly. “Unto God who performeth all things for me.” First, there is *infinite providence*. As it stands, the words, “all things,” you perceive, have been added by the translators. Not that they were mistaken in so doing, for the unlimited expression, “God that performeth for me,” allows them to supply the ellipsis without any violation of the sense.

Secondly, there is *inviolable faithfulness*, as we know that David here referred to God’s working out the fulfillment of the promises He had made. We sang just now of the sweet promise of His grace as the performing God. I think Dr. Watts borrowed that expression from this verse.

Thirdly, there is a *certainty of ultimate completeness*. The original has for its root the word “finishing,” and now working it out, it means a God that performeth or as it were, perfects and accomplishes all things concerning me. Whatever there is in His promise or covenant that I may need, He will perfect for me.

To begin with—

I. THE MARVELOUS PROVIDENCE.

The text, as it stands, speaks of a service—“I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.” “All things,” that is to say, in everything that I have to do, I am but an instrument in His hand—it is God that does it for me. The Christian has no right to have anything to do for which he

cannot ask God's help. Nay, he should have no business which he could not leave with his God. It is His to work and to exercise prudence, but it is his to call in the aid of God to his work and to leave the care of it with the God who cares for him.

Any work in which he cannot ask divine co-operation, the care of which he cannot cast upon God, is unfit for him to be engaged in. Depend upon it, if I cannot say of the whole of my life, "God performeth all things for me," there is sin somewhere, evil lurks in the disposition thereof. If I am living in such a state that I cannot ask God to carry out for me the enterprises I have embarked in, and entirely rely on His providence for the issues, then what I cannot ask Him to do for me, neither have I any right to do for myself.

Let us think, therefore, of the whole of our ordinary life and apply the text to it. Should we not, each morning, cry unto God to give us help through the day? Though we are not going out to preach. Though we are not going up to the assembly for worship. Though it is only our ordinary business, that ordinary business ought to be a consecrated thing. Opportunities for God's service should be sought in our common avocations—we may glorify God very much therein.

On the other hand, our souls may suffer serious damage, we may do much mischief to the cause of Christ in the ordinary walk of any one day. It is for us, then, to begin the day with prayer—to continue all through the day in the same spirit, and to close the day by commending whatsoever we have done to that same Lord. Any success attending that day, if it be real success, is of God who gives it to us.

"Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it," is a statement applicable to the whole of Christian life. It is vain to rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for so He gives His beloved sleep. If there be any true blessing, such blessing, as Jabez craved, when he said, "Oh! that thou wouldst bless me indeed," it must come from the God of heaven—it can come from nowhere else. Cry then, Christian, concerning your common life to God, say continually, "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

Peradventure at this hour you are troubled about some petty little thing or you have been through the day exercised about some trivial matter. Do you not think we often suffer more from our little troubles than from our great ones? A thorn in the foot will irritate our temper, while the dislocation of a joint would reveal our fortitude. Often the man who would bear the loss of a fortune with the equanimity of Job will wince and fume under a paltry annoyance that might rather excite a smile than a groan.

We are apt to be disquieted in vain. Does not this very much arise from our forgetting that God performs all things for us? Do we not ignore the fact that our success in little things, our rightness in the minutiae in life, our comfort in these inconsiderable trifles depends upon His blessing? Know you not that God can make the gnat and the fly to be a greater trouble to Egypt than the murrain, the thunder, or the storm?

Little trials, if unblessed—if unattended with the divine favor, may scourge you fearfully and betray you into much sin. Commend them to God then. And little blessings as you think, if taken away from you, would soon involve very serious consequences. Thank God then for the little. Put the little into His hand—it is nothing to JEHOVAH to work in the little, for the great is little to Him.

There is not much difference, after all, in our littles and our greats to the infinite mind of our glorious God. Cast all on Him who numbers the hairs of your head, and suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground without His decree. Unto God cry about the little things, for He performs all things for us.

Do I speak to some who are contemplating a great change in life? Take not that step, my brother, without much careful waiting upon God. But if you be persuaded that the change is one that has the Master's approbation, fear not, for He performs all things for you.

At this moment you have many perplexities. You may vex yourself with anxiety, and make yourself foolish with shilly-shallying if you sport with fancy, conjuring up bright dreams and yielding to dark forebodings. There is many a knot we seek to untie, which were better cut with the sword of faith. We should end our difficulties by leaving them with Him who knows the end from the beginning.

Up to this moment you have been rightly led—you have the same guide. To this hour, He who sent the cloudy pillar has led you rightly through the devious track-ways of the wilderness—follow still, with a sure confidence that all is well. If you keep close to Him, He performs all things for you. Take your guidance from His Word, and waiting upon Him in prayer, you need not fear.

Just now, perhaps, in addition to some exciting dilemma, you are surrounded with real trouble and distress. Will it not be well to cry unto God Most High, who now, in the time of your strait and difficulty, will show Himself again to you a God all-sufficient to His people in their times of need? He is always near. I do not know that He has said, “When you walk through the green pastures, I will be with you, and when your way lies hard by the river of the water of life, where lilies bloom, I will strengthen you.” I believe He will do so, but I do not remember such a promise.

But “When thou goest through the rivers, I will be with thee,” is a well-known promise of His. If ever He is present, it shall be in trial—if He can be absent, it will certainly not be when His servants most want His aid. Rest you in Him then.

But you say, “I can do so little in this time of difficulty.” Do what you can, but leave the rest to Him. If you see no way of escape, does it follow that there is none? If you see no help, is it, therefore, to be inferred that help cannot come? Your Lord and Savior found no friend among the whole family of man, “Yet,” said He, “could I not presently pray to my Father, and he would send me twelve legions of angels?”

Were it needful for your help, the squadrons of heaven would leave the glory-land to come to your rescue—the least and poorest of the children of God as you may be. He will perform for you—be you, therefore, obedient, trustful, patient. ’Tis yours to obey, ’tis His to command, ’tis yours to perceive, ’tis His to perform. He will perform all things for you.

Very likely amongst this audience, some are foolish enough to perplex themselves as to their future life, and forestall the time when they shall grow old and their vigor shall be abated. It is always unwise to anticipate our troubles. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Of all self-torture, that of importing future trouble into present account is, perhaps, the most insane.

Do you tell me you cannot help looking into the future. Well, then, look and peer into the distance as far as your weak vision can reach, but do not breathe upon the telescope with your anxious breath and fancy you see clouds. On the contrary, just wipe your eyes with the soft kerchief of some gracious word of promise and hold your breath while you gaze through that transparent medium. Use the eye-salve of faith.

Then, whatever you discern of the future, you will also descry this. He rules and He overrules. He will make all things work together for good. He will surely bring you through. Goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. He it is who will perform all things for you.

Oh! strange infatuation! You see your weakness, you see the temptations that will assail you, and the troubles that threaten you, and you are afraid. Look away from them all. This is no business of yours. Leave it in His hands, who will manage well, who will be sure to do the kindest and the best thing for you. Be of good confidence and rest in peace.

So shall it be even at life’s close. He performs all things for me. I have the boundary of life in the prospective, the almost certainty that I must die. Unless the Lord comes before my term expires, I must close these eyes, gather up these feet in the bed, breathe a last gasp, and yield my soul to Him who gave it.

Well, fear not. He helped me to live—He will help me to die. He has made me perform up to this moment my allotted task, yea, He has performed it for me—giving me His grace and working His providence with me. Shall I fear that He will desert me at the last? He performs not some things, but all things, and He cannot omit this most important thing, which often makes me tremble. No, that must be included, for all things are mine—death as well as life. I leave my dying hour, then, with Him, and never boding ill of it, I cry unto God Most High, unto God that performeth all things for me.

I want, dear brethren, to leave this impression in your minds, that in the great business of life, whatever it is, while we do not sit still and fold our hands for lack of work, yet God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. This we recognize distinctly—if anything be done aright, successfully, it is God that performs it, and we give Him the glory. I want you to feel that, as the task is performed by Him in all its details, so to the very close of your life, all shall be performed of His grace through you by Himself, to His own honor and praise, world without end.

The second run of thought which the text suggests is that of—

II. INVIOABLE FAITHFULNESS.

“Unto God that performeth all things for me.” The God who made the promises has not left them as pictures, but has made them to fulfill them. It is God who is the actual worker of all that He declared in the covenant of grace should be wrought in and for His people.

Let us think of this as it pertains to our Redeemer’s merits. “Unto God that performeth all things for me.” Meritoriously our Savior-God has performed all things for us. Our sin has been all put away—He bore it all—every particle of it. The righteousness that wraps us is complete—He has woven it all from the top throughout. All that God’s infinite, unflinching justice can ask of us has been performed for us by our Surety and our Covenant Head.

I need not say I have to fight—my warfare is accomplished. I need not think I have to wash away my sins—as a believer, my sin is pardoned. All things are performed for me. Don’t forget amidst your service for Christ what service Christ has rendered to you. Do all things for Christ, but let the stimulating motive be that Christ has done all things for you. There is not even a little thing that is for you to do to complete the work of Christ.

The temple He has builded wants not that you should find a single stone to make it perfect. The ransom He has paid does not wait until you add the last mite. It is all done. O soul, if Christ has completely redeemed you and saved you, rest on Him and cry to Him, and if sin rebels within you at this present moment, fly—though your spirit is shut up as in the Cave Adullam—fly to Him by faith—to Him who has done all things for you as your Representative and Substitute.

After the same manner, all things in us that have ever been wrought there have been performed by God for us. The Holy Spirit has wrought every fraction of good that is within our souls. No one flower that God loves grows in the garden of our souls in the natural soil, self-sown. The first trembling desire after God came from His Spirit. The blade, though very tender would never have sprung up if Jesus had not sown the seed.

Though the first rays of dawn were scarcely light, but only rendered the darkness visible, yet from the Sun of Righteousness they came—no light sprang from the natural darkness of our spirit. It could not be that life could be begotten of death, or that light could be the child of darkness. He began the work. He led us when we went tremblingly to the foot of the cross. He helped us when we followed Him with staggering steps.

The eyes with which we looked to Jesus and believed, were opened by Him. Christ was revealed to us not by our own discovery, nor by our own tuition, but the Spirit of God revealed the Son of God in our spirit. We looked and we were lightened. The vision and the enlightening were alike from Him—He performed all for us.

As I look back upon my own spiritual career, when I was seeking the Savior, I am wonderfully struck with the way in which God performed everything for me. For if He had not, I do remember well when I should have rendered it impossible for me to have been here to tell of the wonders of His grace. Hard pressed by Satan and by sin, my soul chose strangling rather than life. Had I known more of my own guiltiness, my heart would utterly have broken and my life have failed.

But wisdom and prudence were mingled with the teachings of God’s law. He did not suffer the schoolmaster to be too severe, but stayed the soul beneath the dire remorse which conviction caused. I had never believed on Him if He had not taught me to believe. To give up hope in self was desperate work, and then to find hope in Christ seemed more desperate still.

It appeared to me easy enough to believe in Jesus while one was really believing in one's self, but when "despair" was written upon self, then one was too apt to transfer the despair even to the cross itself, and it appeared impossible to believe. But the Spirit worked faith in me, and I believed.

That is not my testimony, only, but the testimony of all my brethren and sisters—in that hour of sore trouble it was God who performed all things for us. Since then and up to this moment, my brethren, if there has been any virtue, if there has been in you anything lovely and of good repute, to whom do you or can you attribute it? Must you not say, "Of Him all my fruit was found"?

You could not have done without Him. If you have made any progress, if you have made any advance, or even if you think you have, believe me, your growth, advance, progress, have all been a mistake unless they have come entirely from Him. There is no wealth for us but that which is dug in this mine. There is no strength for us but that which comes from the Omnipotent One Himself. "Thou who performest all things for me," must be our cry up to this hour.

What a consolation it is that our God never changes! What He was yesterday He is today. What we find Him today we shall find Him forever. Are you struggling against sin? Don't struggle in your own strength—it is God who performs all things for you. Victories over sin are only sham victories unless we overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and through the power of divine grace.

I am afraid of backsliding, but I think I am more afraid still of growing in sanctification apparently in my own strength. It is a dreadful thing for the grey hairs to appear here and there—but it is worse still for the hair to appear to be of raven hue when the man is weak. Only the indication is changed, but not the state itself.

May we have really what we think we have—no surface work, but deep, inner, spiritual life, wrought in us from God—yea, every good spiritual thing from Him, who performs all things for us. And I say, whatever struggles may come, whatever vehement temptations assail, or whatever thunderclouds may burst over your heads, you shall not be deserted, much less destroyed. In spiritual things it is God who performs all things for you.

Rest in Him then. It is no work of yours to save your own soul—Christ is the Savior. If He cannot save you, you certainly cannot save yourself. Why rest you your hopes where hopes never ought to be rested? Or let me change the question. Why do you fear where you never ought to have hoped? Instead of fearing that you cannot hold on, despair of holding on yourself, and never look in that direction again.

But if the preservation is of God, where is the cause for perturbation with you? In Him let your entire reliance be fixed. Cast the burden of your care on Him who performs all things for you. Lastly, this text in its moral, literal acceptance refers to—

III. THE FINISHING STROKE OF A GRAND DESIGN.

It really means, "I will cry unto God most high—unto God who perfecteth all things concerning me." David's career was charged with a great work. It was portentous with a high destiny. He had been anointed when a lad by Samuel. The Lord had said, "I have provided me a king among the sons of Jesse." And Samuel had taken "the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren."

He was thus clearly ordained to be king over Israel. His way to the throne was by Adullam. Strange route! To be king over Israel and Judah, he must first become a rebel, a wandering vagabond, known as a chieftain of banditti, hunted about by Saul, the reigning monarch. He must seek refuge in the courts of his country's enemies, the Philistines—being without an earthly refuge or place to lay his head. Strange way to a throne!

Yet the Son of David had to go that way, and all the sons of God. The younger brethren of the Crown Prince will have to find their way to their crown by much the same route. But is not this a brave thing? Though Adullam does not look like the way to Zion, where he shall be crowned, David is so confident that what God has said will come to pass, so sure that Samuel's anointing was no farce, but that he must be king, that he praises and blesses God that while He is making of him a houseless wanderer, He is perfecting that which concerns him, and leading him by a sure path to the throne.

Now, can I believe that He who promises that I shall be with Him where He is, that I may behold His glory—He who gives the certainty to every believer that he shall enter into everlasting happiness—can I believe tonight that He is perfecting that for me—that the way by which He is taking me tonight, so dark, so gloomy, so full of dangers, is, nevertheless, the shortest way to heaven? That He is, tonight using the quickest method to perfect that which concerns my soul?

O faith! here is something for you to do and if you can perform it, you shall bring glory to God. The pith of it is this—that if God has the keeping of us, He will perfect the keeping in the day of Christ. In the hand of Jesus all His people are, and in that hand they shall be forever and ever. “None shall pluck them out of my hand,” says He. Their preservation shall be perfected.

So, too, their sanctification. Every child of God is set apart by Christ, and in Christ, and the work of the Spirit has commenced which shall subdue sin, and extirpate the very roots of corruption—and this work shall be perfected. Nay, is being perfected at this very moment. The dragon is being trodden down under foot. The seed of the woman within us is beginning to bruise the serpent’s head and shall clearly bruise it and crush it, even to the death within our soul.

He is perfecting us in all things for Himself. He has promised to bring us to glory. We have the earnest of that great glory in us now. The new life is there—all the elements of heaven are within us. Now He will perfect all these. He will not allow one good thing that He has planted within us to die. It is a living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever. He will perfect all things for us.

There is nothing that makes the saints complete but what God will give to us. There shall be lacking us no one trait of loveliness that is needful for the courtiers of the skies—no one virtue that is necessary to mark us as of the divine race, but shall be given, nay, perfected in us.

What a marvelous thing is a Christian! How mean; how noble! How abject; how august! How near to hell; how close to heaven! How fallen, yet lifted up! Able to do nothing; yet doing all things! Doing nothing; yet accomplishing all things, because herein it is that, in the man, and with the man, there is God—and He performs all things for us. God, give us grace to look away entirely, evermore, from ourselves, and to depend entirely upon Him.

Now is there a soul here that desires salvation? My text gives you the clue of comfort. Try—the thing is simple—try. Look to Him. He performs all things for you. Everything that is wanted to save your soul, your heavenly Father will give you. Jesus, the Savior, has wrought out all the sinner’s wants. You have but to come and take what is already accomplished and rest in it.

“I cannot save myself,” you say. You need not—there is One who performs all things for you. “I am bruised and mangled by the fall,” says one, “as though every bone were broken.” “I am incapable of a good thought. There is nothing good in me, or that can come from me.” Soul! It is not what you can do, but what God can do—what Christ has done—that must be the ground of your hope. Give yourself up unto God, Most High—unto God, who performs all things for you, and you shall be blessed indeed.

God send you away with His own blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 34:1-20

Verse 1. *I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

“Others may do what they please, and murmur, and complain, and be filled with dread and apprehension of the future, but I will bless the Lord at all times. I can always see something for which I ought to bless Him. I can always see some good which will come out of blessing Him. Therefore will I bless Him at all times. And this,” says the Psalmist, “I will not only do in my heart, but I will do with my tongue. His praise shall continually be in my mouth,” that others may hear it, that others may begin to praise Him, too, for murmuring is contagious, and so, thank God, is praise. And one man may learn

from another—take the catchword and the keyword out of another man’s mouth, and then begin to praise God with him.

“His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” What a blessed mouthful! If some people had God’s praises in their mouths, they would not so often find fault with their fellow men. “If half the breath thus vainly spent” in finding fault with our fellow Christians were spent in prayer and praise, how much happier, how much richer we should be spiritually! “His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

2. *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.*

Boasting is generally annoying. Even those that boast themselves cannot endure that other people should boast. But there is one kind of boasting that even the humble can bear to hear—nay, they are glad to hear it. “The humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” That must be boasting in God—a holy glorying and extolling the Most High with words sought out with care that might magnify His blessed name. You will never exaggerate when you speak good things of God. It is not possible to do so.

Try, dear brethren, and even boast in the Lord. There are many poor, trembling, doubting, humble souls that can hardly tell whether they are the Lord’s people or not, and are half afraid whether they shall be delivered in the hour of trouble, that will become comforted when they hear you boasting. “The humble shall hear thereof and be glad.”

“Why,” says the humble soul, “God that helped that man can help me. He that brought him up through the deep waters and landed him safely, can also take me through the river and through the sea, and give me final deliverance. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.” “The humble shall hear thereof and be glad.”

3. *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

He cannot do enough of it himself. He wants others to come in and help him. First, he charges his own heart with the weighty and blessed business of praising God, and then he invites all around to unite with him in the sacred effort. “Magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt His name together.”

4. *I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

That was David’s testimony. That is mine. Brother, that is yours. Is it not? Sister, is not that yours, too? Well, if you have such a blessed testimony, be sure to bear it. Often do you whisper it in the mourner’s ear, “I sought the Lord and he heard me.” Tell it in the scoffer’s ear. When he says, “There is no God,” and that prayer is useless, say to him, “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” It is a pity that such a sweet encouraging profitable testimony should be kept back. Be sure at all proper times to make it known. But it is not merely ourselves. There are others who can speak well of God.

5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

And who were they? Why, all the people of God—the whole company of the saints in heaven and the saints on earth. It can be said of them all, “They looked to him and were lightened.” As there is life in a look, so is there light in a look. Oh! you that looked to Christ and lived at first, look to Him again, if it is dark with you tonight—and speedily it shall be light round about you. “They looked unto him, and were lightened.”

6. *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

Who was he? He was a poor man—any poor man—nothing very particular about him, but he was poor—a poor man. What did he do? He cried. That was the style of praying he adopted—as a child cries—the natural expression of pain. Poor man, he did not know how to pray a fine prayer and he could not have preached you a sermon if you had given him a bishop’s salary for it.

But he cried. He could do that. You do not need to go to the Board School to learn how to cry. Any living child can cry. This poor man cried. What came of it? “The Lord heard him.” I do not suppose anybody else did, or if they did, they laughed at it. But it did not matter to him. The Lord heard him. And what came of that? He “saved him out of all his troubles.”

Oh! is there a poor man here tonight in trouble? Had he not better copy the example of this other poor man? Let him cry to the Lord about it. Let him come and bring his burdens before the great One

who hears poor men's prayers. And no doubt, that poor man lived to tell the same tale as he who wrote this verse. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard and saved him out of all his troubles."

7. *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.*

It is no wonder, then, that they are delivered, for the angels are always handy. They are waiting round about God's people. Lo, they are not at a distance to fly swiftly and come for our rescue, but God has set a camp of angels round about all His people.

Are we not royally attended? What a portion is ours! Many are they that be against us, but glorious are they that are for us, both in their number and their strength. But the text does not intend so much the angels, as one blessed, glorious, covenant angel—the angel of the Lord, the messenger of God. He it is that holds His camp hard by His people and sends His messengers for their rescue in all times of difficulty.

8. *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

That is the language of experience. Some of us have lived by trusting God for many years, and instead of growing weary of it, we would invite others to do the same. Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good. You cannot know His goodness without tasting it. But there was never a soul yet that did taste of the goodness of the Lord but what could bear cheerful testimony that it was even so.

"Oh! taste and see." Partake of it. Become practically acquainted with it. Trust God yourselves and none of you shall ever have to complain of God. To your last hour you will have to find fault with yourselves, but never once will you have to accuse Him of changeableness, or of unfaithfulness, or even of forgetfulness. "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good, for blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

9-10. *O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

They are very strong, those young lions. They are fierce. They are rapacious. They are cunning. And yet they do lack and suffer hunger. And there are many men in this world that are very clever, strong in body and active in mind. They say that they can take care of themselves, and perhaps they do appear to prosper, but we know that often you who are the most prosperous apparently are the most miserable of men. They are young lions, but they do lack and suffer hunger.

But when a man's soul lives upon God, he may have very little of this world, but he will be perfectly content. He has learnt the secret of true happiness. He does not want any good thing, for the things that he does not have he does not wish to have. He brings his mind down to his estate, if he cannot bring his estate to his mind. He is thankful to have a little spending money on the road, for his treasure is above. He likes to have his best things last, and so he is well content if he has food and raiment, to urge on his way to the rest which remains for the people of God. "The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

11. *Come, ye children,*

You that are beginning life—you that want to know where true happiness is found.

11. *Hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

It is that which you want to know, beyond everything else.

12-13. *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

He that can rule his tongue can rule his whole body. Alas! that unruly member destroys peace and happiness in thousands of cases. The tongue can no man tame, but the grace of God can tame it. And that man begins life with a prospect of happiness whose tongue has been tamed by grace.

14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

True happiness is found in true holiness. "Depart from evil." That is, do not go after it. But it is much more than that. Get away from it. Give it a wide berth. "Depart from evil." But be not satisfied with the negatives. It is not enough to say, "I do not do any evil," but do good. The only way to keep out the evil is to fill the soul full of good. We must be active in the cause of God, or Satan will soon lead us into sin. "Depart from evil, and do good."

“Seek peace.” Be of a quiet turn of mind. Be always ready to forgive. “Seek peace and pursue it.” That is, when it runs away, run after it. Make up your mind that you will have it. There are some that seek quarrels. There are some that seek revenge. As for you, seek peace and pursue it.

15. *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

God is all eye and all ear, and all His eye and all His ear are for His people. Are you distressed in heart? God sees your distress. Are you crying in secret in the bitterness of your soul? God hears your cry. You are not alone. O lonely spirit, broken spirit, be not dismayed—be not given to despair—God is with you. If He sees nothing else, He will see you. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.” And if He hears no one else in the world, He will hear you—“His ears are open to their cry.”

16. *The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

You know what we sometimes say—“I set my face against such a thing as that.” Now God sets His face against them that do evil. You will come to an end, my friend. Your happiness, like a bubble painted with rainbow colors, may be the object of foolish desires, but in a little while it will burst and be gone, as the bubble is, and there will be nothing left of you. Even your remembrance will be wiped out from the face of the earth.

What numbers of books have been written against God of which you could not get a copy now, except you went to a museum? What numbers of men have lived that have been scoffers—and they who had great names among the circles of unbelievers, but they are quite forgotten now! But the Christian church treasures up names of poor, simple-hearted Christian men and women—treasures them up like jewels and their fame is fresh after hundreds of years.

17. *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

That is how we live, if you want to know. God makes us righteous and then we cry. We often praise Him. We desire to have our mouth full of it. But we cry as well, and whenever we cry, God hears, and our troubles are removed.

18. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

Are you here tonight, poor weeping Mary? Are you here, broken-hearted, troubled sinner? Are you here? Are you seeking the Lord? Do not seek Him any longer. You have got Him. Read the text, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.” He is with you now. Speak to Him. Cry to Him. Trust Him. You shall find deliverance this night.

19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous:*

You should hear some of them talk, and you would soon know that, for I know some of the righteous that seldom talk of anything else. “Oh! the badness of trade!” They have been losing money—oh! ever since I knew them. They had not any when they started, but they have gone on losing money every year—and I believe they always will.

And they always have pains of body. The weather is so bad. And they always have ungrateful friends. And the church they belong to is not up to the mark. Indeed, there is nothing around them that is right. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.”

Well now, dear brethren, as that is recorded in God’s Word, and most of us have a pretty good acquaintance with that subject, I do not think that it is necessary for all of us to insist upon it every day. Could not we go on to the next part of the verse? “Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” but—but—

19. *But the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*

Not out of some of them, but out of them all, however numerous they may be.

20. *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

He sustains no real injury. He gets flesh-wounds and bruises, but his bones are not broken. That is to say, the substantial part of his nature is well kept and preserved.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.